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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY,
APRIL 08, 2003

¶1. This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for April 08, 2003. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

¶12. Milliyet: Osman Ocalan, the brother of PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan, announced to Reuters that the war on Iraq created a new opportunity for the PKK, which now seeks to benefit from disagreements between Washington and Ankara. Osman Ocalan was interviewed by a Reuters' reporter in PKK/KADEK camp at Kandil Mountain in northern Iraq. He claimed the disagreement that resulted by Ankara's refusal of the motion gave them an opportunity to push their issues forward, and assessed that it would be possible for the PKK to establish ties with the US. He expressed his wish to form an alliance with Washington.

¶13. Cumhuriyet/Evrensel/Tercuman/Milli Gazete: It is reported that some of the 12 Patriot missiles unloaded at Iskenderun port and forwarded on to Incirlik AFB will be deployed at the Turkish border, while others will be deployed in northern Iraq. Meanwhile, 42 trucks that left the base in Kiziltepe (Mardin) also arrived in Iskenderun. "Explosive Material" and "Ammunition" signs were seen on some of the containers. Following the conclusion of the movement from the bases in the Mardin industrial zone, the rented facilities will be turned over to the owners again.

¶14. Sabah: Iskenderun will become the center for transportation of food items to be exported to Iraq under the oil-for-food program administered by the United Nations. An independent company, Coteagna, which has been selected by the UN, will start working in Iskenderun to coordinate the deliveries. Turkish firms interested in exporting to Iraq will also apply to the office in Iskenderun. It is reported that about 250 trucks will carry foodstuffs from Iskenderun to Iraq on a daily basis. Because the Habur border gate to northern Iraq is sealed, the foodstuffs are being kept in warehouses rented in Gaziantep for the time being.

¶15. Radikal: The UN expedited its shipment of food items to civilians in northern Iraq under the World Food Program. One thousand tons of flour was shipped to Dohuk last week, and more shipment of food items continued the previous night and today, too. The authorities announced that most of the shipment of 6 thousand tons of flour had been accomplished, and the shipments would continue as needed. The UN has dispatched 100 trucks of food items to northern Iraq since last week.

¶16. Radikal/Milli gazete: American doctors, who evacuated their logistical support center in Mardin, made rounds at the State Hospital in Mardin. It is claimed that the Americans have been doing such a study in order to evaluate the possibility of bringing their wounded troops to the hospital. The police visiting the hospital afterwards determined that the US doctors had not obtained permission from the governor's office to visit the hospital. The police informed local officials of the case.

¶17. Turkiye/Bolge: Based on a tip, the police arrested 11 persons on alleged membership in a gang involved in extortion in Tarsus township of

Mersin. Three pistols of assorted make and radius, one automatic hunting gun, and various promissory notes were seized on the suspects, who were ordered held by the court.

¶8. Turkiye: Jandarmas searching some houses in the hamlet of Dogan (Diyarbakir) seized 3 unlicensed Kalashnikovs, 371 bullets for that weapon, and 32 pistol bullets. They arrested three persons in connection with the weapons.

¶9. Turkiye: Jandarma teams arrested a Hizbulah member in Kabasakal hamlet near Ergani (Diyarbakir). His name had previously been found in a computer disc seized during an operation in Istanbul in 2000. The interrogation of the Hizbulah member, whose name has not been disclosed, is continuing.

¶10. Turkiye: 24 Afghan nationals who had illegally passed into Turkey were arrested in Ozalp township of Van. An investigation is underway.

¶11. Milliyet/Tercuman: The number of families in Yenikoy hamlet near Siverek (Sanliurfa), dropped from 15 to 3 due to ongoing blood feud that stemmed from land dispute between the Gurkan and Gurkmen families of the "Kiran" tribe five years ago. Some 13 people have been killed in the fight between the two families who, as a consequence of the feud, were unable to cultivate their land or send their children to school. While many people have evacuated the village, the remaining inhabitants, mostly women and children, have built positions on the roofs of their houses and reinforced their doors and windows to guard against possible attacks.

HOLTZ